

## **Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Schools and Childcare Facilities**

This document provides guidance for COVID-19 prevention in DC Schools and Childcare Facilities. For additional information, including current District COVID-19-related public health data, please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

### **PREVENTION OF COVID-19**

COVID-19 prevention strategies for Schools and Childcare Facilities are divided into 2 categories: Everyday prevention measures that should be kept in place during all COVID-19 Community Levels<sup>1</sup> (including **Low**), and enhanced prevention measures that can be implemented during **Medium** or **High** COVID-19 Community Levels OR in response to facility and student-specific needs (e.g. during a facility outbreak or to maintain a safe in-person learning environment for disabled or immunocompromised students). These are summarized below for easy reference. For full details, see *Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Educational Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning* at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html).

- **Everyday prevention measures (regardless of COVID-19 Community Level):**
  - COVID-19 vaccination
  - Staying home when sick
  - Isolation (for symptomatic or COVID-19 positive people)
    - Schools and childcare facilities must remove and exclude individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms of COVID-19 pursuant to 22B DCMR §§ 209.1 — 209.8 for schools and 5A DCMR §§ 151.1 – 151.8, 162.4 and 118.4 for childcare facilities.
  - Precautions<sup>2</sup> (for people exposed to COVID-19)
  - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
  - Optimizing indoor ventilation and air quality
  - Cleaning and disinfection
  
- **Enhanced prevention measures for High COVID-19 Community Levels (or facility-specific needs):**
  - Masks/respirators
  - Avoiding crowding in the facility
  - **Consider** COVID-19 screening testing for students and staff (vaccinated or unvaccinated) for high-risk activities (e.g., close contact sports, band, choir, theater); at key times in the year such as before/after large events (e.g., prom, tournaments, group travel); and when returning from breaks (e.g., holidays, spring break, at the beginning of the school year).
  - Prioritizing outdoor activities
  
- **Regardless of COVID-19 community level, encourage everyone to respect the choice of others who wish to wear a mask.**

<sup>1</sup> **COVID-19 Community Levels** are a CDC tool to help communities and individuals decide what prevention steps to take based on the COVID-19 level in their area. There are 3 levels: **Low**, **Medium**, and **High**. To look up current COVID-19 Community Levels for DC and other areas of the U.S., see [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html).

<sup>2</sup> For more information on precautions after exposure, see *Guidance After Exposure to a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions, Quarantine and Testing* available at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance)

## ADDITIONAL FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Exposure identification and communication**
  - Facilities should have a process in place to notify individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the facility (e.g., a letter, an email, a phone call) to inform them to monitor for symptoms.
  - Schools and childcare facilities should share the following with potentially exposed staff and parents/guardians of potentially exposed students:
    - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
    - Referral to *Guidance After Exposure to a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions, Quarantine and Testing*, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance)
    - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing).
  - The privacy of the staff or student must be maintained.
- **Reporting:**
  - Schools and childcare facilities **must** notify DC Health if:
    - They have 25 or more confirmed COVID-19 cases tied to a single event that occurred at or was hosted/sponsored by the facility.
    - Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website: [dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements](https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements).
      - ❖ Submit a Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form at [dccovid.force.com/NonHealthcareConsultRequestForm/s/](https://dccovid.force.com/NonHealthcareConsultRequestForm/s/)
      - ❖ DC Health must be notified on the same day the outbreak was reported to the facility, as soon as possible after the facility was notified.
    - Note: Childcare facilities licensed by OSSE must report any instance of communicable disease, including COVID-19, to OSSE by submitting an unusual incident report, as required by OSSE licensing regulations.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the District's pandemic response evolves. Please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov) regularly for the most current information.